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"Project Africa" surveyed selected seventh- and 12th-grade students in 24 states to determine (1) the specific nature of their images of Africa south of the Sahara, both before and after any formal study of this region, and (2) the types and accuracy of the students' knowledge about the region and its peoples. In one survey, students were asked to match stimulus words with regions of the world. In a second survey, a multiple choice test consisting of questions exclusively on Africa was used. The results of these surveys indicated that students have a stereotyped and inaccurate image of the region and that their basic knowledge about it is minimal. The conclusion is that, because students leaving secondary school should have a basic understanding of Africa, the region south of the Sahara must receive more adequate treatment, in both quantity and quality, than it presently does receive. (See also TE 499 973). (LH)

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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IMAGES OF AFRICA

A REPORT ON
WHAT AMERICAN SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS
KNOW AND BELIEVE ABOUT
AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA

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PROJECT AFRICA

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I

INTRODUCTION

The impressions and knowledge which Americans have of Africa south of the Sahara begin to develop early in life. Since little attention has traditionally been given to the study of this region in American schools, these impressions are more the product of outside sources than of any formal learning or study. Until recently, missionary reports, Tarzan stories and Frank Buck's big-game hunting adventures were the primary sources at work in shaping the popular image and knowledge of this region and its peoples. To these must now be added such current influences as Daktari and Cowboy in Africa as well as assorted travel films and posters.

The images which these sources nurture and sustain vary greatly in accuracy and completeness. However, they do exist--in many instances with great tenacity. Furthermore, these images are brought by students to the formal study of this region when it is included in their secondary school social studies curricula. Educators need to be aware of this fact and of the nature of these impressions and knowledge, if classroom learning about this region is to be meaningful and effective. Instruction about Africa south of the Sahara must be related to an awareness of just precisely what students believe to be true about it prior to commencing its study.

Project Africa is a social studies curriculum development project commissioned to design, develop and test instructional materials and techniques for use in improving instruction about Africa south of the Sahara in American secondary schools. Preparatory to the design of these materials, this Project undertook to determine exactly what American secondary school students know or felt about this region and its inhabitants.[1]

This investigation consisted of two types of research. The first was an examination of all available relevant research and literature. Only one study about how students view Africa south of the Sahara was discovered. This was, however, conducted in the early 1950's and was restricted to a small number of fourth grade students in New York City.[2] In addition, a number of educators and Africanists have also reported what they believe to be commonly-held images of this region, but these reports seem to be based more on their own personal experi-

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1. This Project was originally located at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. It is presently located at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

2. Marguerite Cartwright, "The Africa Unit," The Social Studies, November, 1953. Pp. 264-268.

ences and impressions than on reported data.[3] There exist virtually no detailed studies or other research which describe what students entering the secondary grades believe to be true of Africa south of the Sahara.

Consequently, Project Africa sought to collect such information itself. This effort constituted the second type of research undertaken by this Project. During the Fall of 1967 it conducted two different surveys of a nation-wide sample of America's secondary school students. What follows is a report of the results of these surveys.

The Project Africa surveys sought to determine the specific nature of the images about Africa south of the Sahara currently held by selected secondary school students and the types and accuracy of their knowledge about this region and its peoples. To do this, two instruments were prepared by the Project in cooperation with The Ohio State University Test Development Center. The first was a WORLD REGIONS PERCEPTION SURVEY; the second was a multiple-choice test of selected information entitled simply AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA.[4]

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3. Giles T. Brown, "What Americans Must Learn About Africa," Overview, November, 1961. Pp. 44-45.

   George E. Haynes, "Americans Look at Africa," The Journal of Negro Education, Volume 27, No. 1 (Winter, 1958). Pp. 94-100.

   Leonard Kenworthy, Studying Africa in Elementary and Secondary Schools, New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1965 (second edition). Pp. 8-10.

   James W. King, "Africa South of the Sahara," in John Morris', Handbook for Teachers of Geography, to be published shortly by Ginn-Blaisdell for the National Council for Geographic Education. (Manuscript courtesy of the author and N.C.G.E.)

   Gerald Leinwand, The Pageant of World History, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1966. Pp. 557-561.

4. A detailed description of each instrument may be found on pp.6-9 and 20-23 following.

Each of these survey instruments was administered to seventh and twelfth grade students across the nation. Since it was the intent of the Project to delineate the knowledge and images held by most students at these grade levels, different groups were surveyed by different schools. Where students were grouped according to their abilities, classes defined as "average" in the local school (neither slow learners nor honors students) were surveyed. Where students were heterogeneously grouped classes were selected at random for the surveys. Although entire classes were surveyed at a time, the survey was conducted early enough in the school year so that the results would most likely represent the responses of individuals rather than of closely knit classes that had learned together as single groups.

Because the Project wished to identify images existant before and after any formal study of this region at the secondary level, seventh and twelfth graders were selected as subjects for the surveys. Africa south of the Sahara, if it is studied at all in these grades, is customarily studied in either a world geography or world history (cultures) course. The former is usually studied first most frequently at the seventh, ninth or tenth grade level. In many schools it is required of all students. Thus, it was necessary to survey seventh graders early in the academic year before they had commenced any formal study about this region at the secondary level.

Africa is also frequently a subject of study in ninth or tenth grade world history (cultures) courses. It is occasionally studied indirectly in relation to American history during the junior year. Rarely is it studied at the twelfth grade. For the vast majority of high school students, therefore, whatever formal study of Africa south of the Sahara they might have, would have been prior to their final year of schooling. Thus twelfth graders were selected in order to determine the nature of the images and knowledge students held after formal study about this region in the secondary grades.

Seventh and twelfth grade students in twenty-eight school districts in twenty-four states were surveyed. These districts were selected from a list of districts chosen to represent the general distribution of types of schools in the major sections of the United States. Not all schools originally invited to administer the surveys were able to do so, however. Several declined for local reasons. Some found it impossible to identify classroom teachers willing to take the class time required to administer the surveys. Consequently, the Project found it necessary to secure the cooperation of additional schools. Because several schools which had agreed to administer the

surveys failed to do so, the Project found itself with less than the desired number of districts in the final sample.

The schools in which the surveys were finally administered ranged in size from the largest metropolitan schools to suburban districts and very small rural schools where a single room included more than one grade level.[5] Twenty-six of these were public school systems. Two were private parochial systems. These twenty-eight school systems were distributed as shown in Table I.

TABLE I

DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY SCHOOLS

SECTION	TYPE OF SCHOOL			
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Total
Northeast	4	2	2	8
South	5	1	0	6
Midwest and Plains	6	1	1	8
West and Southwest	4	0	2	6
Totals:	19	4	5	28

5. The classification of each school was based on the nature of its student population and was made by its own administration in response to a request from Project Africa. It should be noted that some schools self-classified as urban were in communities under 20,000 population while others were in cities exceeding 2,000,000 population.

Each of the two surveys was administered to a separate class of approximately 25-28 students at each of the two selected grade levels in each of the cooperating school districts. These classes were chosen by the local school officials in accord with the grade, ability-level and other specifications of the Project. A total of 3,259 students were surveyed. They were distributed as shown in Table II.

TABLE II

SURVEY SAMPLES

SURVEY	7th GRADERS	12th GRADERS
WORLD RECIONS PERCEPTION SURVEY	841	779
AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA	845	794

Both surveys were scheduled for administration during the week of October 10, 1967 before the students had begun any study of Africa south of the Sahara. In all but two instances this was done. In these latter cases, local circumstances delayed their administration for several weeks.

In each school every effort was taken to maintain the integrity of each survey. Students were not forewarned about the nature or purpose of the instruments. Where both surveys were to be administered in the same building, the WORLD REGIONS PERCEPTION SURVEY--whose validity depended on the students not knowing it was designed to secure data especially about Africa south of the Sahara--was administered before the multiple choice instrument. No student was included in both surveys. Each survey administrator certified upon returning the surveys and again in response to a follow-up inquiry that the instruments had been administered as directed.

These surveys are an attempt to identify exactly what most American seventh and twelfth graders think and know about Africa south of the Sahara. As such, the results have important implications for all those engaged or interested in designing, initiating or revising programs of study about this region and its peoples. This was the Project's purpose for administering the surveys in the first place. And, it is to assist others engaged in similar endeavors that this report has been prepared.

II

HOW AMERICAN SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS VIEW AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA

American secondary school students today view Africa south of the Sahara as a hot, primitive land where man-killing beasts prowl the dense jungles stalked by black savages armed only with spears and poison darts. It is a land of grass huts, thumping drums and mystery. For most, it is still best typified by the adventures of Lex Baxter's Tarzan and his friends.

Such an image emerges sharply from the results of Project Africa's 1967 nation-wide survey of American seventh and twelfth grade students.

This survey was designed by Project Africa in cooperation with Africanists and specialists in educational research and evaluation. Its purpose was twofold. It was, first, to determine what, if any, general image or concept of Africa south of the Sahara exists among selected American secondary school students. Secondly it was to determine to what degree this image, if it did indeed exist, is stereotyped.

The Survey Instrument

In order to obtain a valid measure of this image, it was considered necessary that the students being surveyed remain unaware that Africa south of the Sahara was the prime focus of the survey. Therefore, every effort was made to avoid connecting the survey with this region. The survey was entitled a WORLD REGIONS PERCEPTION SURVEY. It was identified only as a product of the Social Studies Curriculum Development Center of The Ohio State University. Survey administrators informed the students that its purpose was to discover what they thought about various parts of the world.

The instrument itself in no way revealed any orientation toward Africa south of the Sahara. It consisted of a packet containing an outline map of the world, seven envelopes and a deck of stimulus cards. The outside of the packet contained a space for the student to record the name of his school as well as his own age, grade level and sex. In taking the survey the students were asked, in essense, to match the stimulus cards with those regions of the world with which they most closely identified them.

The map was a two-color, 9" x 16" outline map of the world. It was divided into seven regions: North America, South America, Europe, Middle East, Africa south of the Sahara, Russia and Asia. Labels

such as "Middle East" and "Russia" were used because pre-tests indicated that students could recognize the regions to which they referred better than if such labels as "Arab World," "Eurasia," or "U.S.S.R." were used.

In order to keep the map as simple and uncluttered as possible, Oceania was omitted altogether and East and South Asia were combined into one region labeled "Asia." Although this latter combination did unite two distinctly different cultures within a single region, it was considered permissible since the focus of the survey was on Africa south of the Sahara.

Each of the seven envelopes in the packet was labeled with the name of one of the regions on the map of the world. The style of print and color of the names on the envelopes were identical to those on the map.

The deck of stimulus cards consisted of ninety cards numbered consecutively. Each card contained a different word or phrase. Twenty-five of these terms represented what the survey designers hypothesized to be the typical image--the stereotyped view--of Africa south of the Sahara held today by most American students.

These twenty-five terms were selected from a number of sources. A research study conducted by Marguerite Cartwright involving 251 fourth graders in ten New York City schools in 1953 provided a long list of terms typically used by these students to describe their impressions of Africa south of the Sahara.[1] Reports and articles by other educationists and Africanists identified additional words or phrases which they felt represented a peculiarly American stereotype of this region and its peoples.[2] These were added to those identified by Cartwright.

During the summer of 1967 Project Africa conducted a pilot study based on Cartwright's model to further identify current stereotyped views of Africa south of the Sahara. Thirty-five seventh and tenth graders were asked to write brief essays describing their impressions of this region and its inhabitants. Some drew sketches in place of or in addition to these essays. Analysis of these provided words and phrases typically used to describe Africa south of the Sahara which in some instances duplicated and in others supplemented those already identified.

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1. Cartwright, op cit.

2. Brown, op cit; Haynes, op cit; Kenworthy, op cit; King, op cit; Leinwand, op cit.

All of these terms were then submitted to a panel of five experienced classroom teachers and Africanists who identified independently those they believed to be most stereotypic of Africa south of the Sahara. Thus, the twenty-five terms hypothesized as representative of the current American stereotype of this region were a composite of those identified (by Cartwright, related reports and literature, the project's pilot study, and a panel of educators) as those used most frequently to describe this region and its peoples. These terms as well as the others used in the survey are listed in Table III.

TABLE III

STIMULUS WORDS USED IN WORLD REGIONS PERCEPTION SURVEY

*STRANGE	DAKTARI	BONANZA	SCULPTURE
DEPARTMENT STORE	SOCIALISM	*POISON DARTS	UNDERDEVELOPED
*VILLAGES	*SUPERSTITION	CITIES	GRASSLANDS
DISEASE	DICTATORSHIP	OIL	*WITCH DOCTORS
ENEMY	COWARDLY	*DRUMS	TELEVISION
*SNAKES	*WILD ANIMALS	MUSLIM	DANCE
BRAVE	FOLK SONGS	WEAK	MALNUTRITION
ART	PLANTATIONS	RAILROAD	POWERFUL
*MINERAL WEALTH	*TIGERS	*SAVAGES	RELIGION
HOUSES	CHRISTIAN	SCHOOLS	*CANNIBALS
CLEAN	WHITE	DIRTY	RICH
*HUTS	GLORIOUS PAST	COLD	*PRIMITIVE
AUTOMOBILES	*SPEARS	BACKWARD	VIOLENCE
*MISSIONARIES	DEMOCRACY	WELL-EDUCATED	CATTLE
CIVILIZED	BEAUTIFUL	FISHING	NEUTRALITY
*HOT	*BLACK	RACIAL PROBLEMS	
FARMS	OVERPOPULATED	*ELEPHANTS	
INDUSTRY	LAKES	BUDDHIST	
*NAKED	CAPITALISM	*NATIVES	
MUSIC	*JUNGLES	FRIEND	
CHURCHES	POOR	TEMPLES	
NO HISTORY	FORESTS	*TRIBE	
PEACE	FREEDOM	ILLITERATE	
PALM TREES	*DESERTS	MOUNTAINS	
TRADE	HINDU	*PYGMIES	

*Stimulus words which reflect the hypothesized stereotype.

The remaining sixty-five stimulus cards contained terms of different types. Some were words or phrases descriptive of parts of Africa south of the Sahara but commonly associated, at least in the United States, with other parts of the world. Some were terms normally associated with modern, industrial nations such as the United States. Several were adjectives that could apply to any region depending on one's point of view; these included such terms as friend, enemy, brave and cowardly. Finally, there were terms which were neutral in that they could apply to almost any region--ie: trade, art, music and religion.

The ninety terms which comprised this deck of stimulus cards were selected from a larger number that was pre-tested on fifth and sixth graders in two different types of schools during the summer of 1967. In this way words or phrases which might have caused comprehension problems for junior and senior high school students were identified and modified or eliminated.

The Sample

The WORLD REGIONS PERCEPTION SURVEY was administered to seventh and twelfth graders of average ability in twenty-eight school systems throughout the United States. Schools in twenty-four states were sampled and included public and private, rural, urban and suburban school systems.[3] The survey was administered to 841 seventh graders and to 779 twelfth graders.

Administration of the Survey

The survey was administered to selected classes in each school according to detailed instructions provided by Project Africa. In most cases the classroom teachers themselves served as the survey administrators. However, in several schools the surveys were administered by specialists in testing or research or by other supervisory personnel.

The purpose of the survey was described to the students as an effort to secure information on how American students viewed different regions of the world so that teaching about these could be improved by new materials to be subsequently designed by The Ohio State University Social Studies Curriculum Center.

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3. For a detailed description of the survey schools, see above pp. 4-5.

An instrument packet was then given to each student who filled in the information called for on the front of the packet. Next, the students removed the map from the packet, spread it out on their desks and located the various regions depicted on it as the teacher read the name of each and outlined it on a similar map displayed for all to see.

The students then removed the deck of stimulus cards from the packet. After reading the word on the top card they were instructed to decide which region of the world was best described by that word and to place the card on that region outlined on their map. The students were then directed to do the same for every remaining card. Once the survey administrator was satisfied that the students understood the nature of the task, they all proceeded at their own individual rates to distribute the remaining stimulus cards on the regions which they were felt to describe best.

Students were cautioned that not every card had to be placed on a region. If they did not know the meaning of a stimulus word or phrase they were directed to place it on the desk beside the map. If a word seemed to describe more than one region they were instructed to decide which region it <u>best</u> described and place it there.

This task took, on the average, fifteen minutes. When all students had completed placing the cards in appropriate piles, they were directed to take the envelope labeled NORTH AMERICA from the packet and to transfer into it all the cards placed on the region labeled NORTH AMERICA on the outline map. The envelope was then sealed. This procedure was repeated for each of the remaining regions. Cards that had not been placed on any specific region were returned loose to the original packet. The map and seven sealed envelopes were then placed back in the packet. It was sealed and then collected by the survey administrator who returned all the survey packets to Project Africa.

As soon as the survey packets had been returned to the project, a follow-up questionnaire was sent to all survey administrators. This questionnaire sought to identify the degree to which the administration of the survey had been in accord with the Project's instructions. Of special interest was whether or not the student had, at the time of the survey, any inkling whatsoever that it was actually focused on Africa south of the Sahara. The questionnaire was also designed to identify any reactions to the survey itself as well as to secure information on how the school classified both itself and the students who were surveyed.

No problems or deviations from the prescribed administrative procedure were revealed by this questionnarie. Every survey administrator

asserted that no student was aware that the survey was directed only at Africa south of the Sahara. In numerous instances, moreover, the survey administrators volunteered that the students who had taken the survey found it a challenging and very enjoyable experience.

Analysis of the Data

Upon return of the survey packets to the Project, each student's responses were tabulated and punched on IBM cards. Each card was also coded with appropriate information about the student's grade level, type of school and region of the country in which it was located.

The data were analysed in several ways. To determine the nature of the general image that students have of Africa south of the Sahara, the percentage of students who associated a particular stimulus term with it was computed and the terms arranged in descending order from the highest percentage to the lowest percentage. On a purely chance basis, each term could be expected to be associated with this region--or any other--by 14.29% of the students. However, only those terms associated with this region by at least 25% of the students were selected as significantly descriptive of the sample's concept of Africa south of the Sahara. In order to place this image in its proper perspective the same procedure was used to determine the terms selected by students to describe the other regions of the world included in the survey.

Comparisons were also made between grade levels and among various sections of the nation and types of schools to determine if such factors were correlated with the students' image of Africa south of the Sahara.

In addition, the original estimate of the students' image of Africa south of the Sahara was checked against the results of the survey. The number of students who associated each of the twenty-five stereotype terms with Africa were added together and divided by the total possible responses to these twenty-five terms. This gives a percentage which indicates how closely the original estimate approximates at least a part of the students' image of Africa.

Next, an index number called the Degree of Stereotypy was computed for each of the ninety stimulus words.[4] This statistic $Ds = \frac{n}{n-1} f_i^2 - \frac{1}{n-1}$ has the following properties:

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4. This statistic was developed by John E. Fruend and reported in "The Degree of Stereotypy," American Statistical Association Journal (June 1950), Pp. 265-269.

a) if the frequency of response to particular stimulus word is equal for all seven areas, Ds = 0.

b) if all the responses fall into one region and none into the other six regions, Ds = 1.

c) Ds is restricted to the interval from 0 to 1.

Therefore, the more agreement among students as to which region of the world is best described by a particular term--i.e: the stronger the stereotype--the larger the Degree of Stereotypy.

Results

The image that students have of Africa south of the Sahara can be described by those terms which at least 25% of the students chose as describing Africa better than any other region. This image is given perspective by comparing it with the terms that at least 25% of the students choose as best describing some region other than Africa south of the Sahara. Table IV gives these descriptions for seventh grade students and Table V gives them for twelfth grade students.

TABLE IV

STIMULUS TERMS PLACED IN VARIOUS REGIONS BY 25% OR MORE SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS

AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA

Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%
WILD ANIMALS	87.25	DRUMS	77.33	DISEASE	46.46
DAKTARI	85.32	BLACK	76.94	PRIMITIVE	45.99
ELEPHANTS	84.32	SAVAGES	75.90	HOT	42.02
WITCH DOCTORS	84.66	CANNIBALS	69.14	STRANGE	40.58
JUNGLES	79.64	NAKED	67.96	DESERTS	35.80
TIGERS	79.38	PYGMIES	64.94	DIRTY	35.21
SPEARS	79.17	HUTS	59.00	UNDERDEVELOPED	33.62
TRIBE	78.36	SNAKES	55.36	MISSIONARIES	33.57
NATIVES	77.98	VILLAGES	49.40	NO HISTORY	26.90
POISON DARTS	77.57	SUPERSTITION	48.47	POOR	26.22
				BACKWARD	25.06

TABLE IV
(cont'd)

NORTH AMERICA

Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%
TELEVISION	92.32	LAKES	75.03	DANCE	50.78
HOUSES	88.42	INDUSTRY	73.01	FARMS	48.99
DEPARTMENT STORE	88.05	DEMOCRACY	69.28	CAPITALISM	46.68
SCHOOLS	87.98	BONANZA	69.16	PEACE	45.77
FREEDOM	87.44	CHURCHES	63.14	RACIAL PROBLEMS	44.32
AUTOMOBILES	87.37	CHRISTIAN	61.48	FORESTS	43.86
WELL-EDUCATED	83.65	POWERFUL	61.24	MINERAL WEALTH	42.41
CLEAN	82.42	BRAVE	60.55	GLORIOUS PAST	41.08
WHITE	81.20	CATTLE	56.30	SOCIALISM	40.54
RAILROAD	78.57	BEAUTIFUL	52.86	FISHING	38.71
CIVILIZED	77.78	FOLK SONGS	52.81	OIL	37.23
RICH	76.89	RELIGION	51.61	MUSIC	32.10
CITIES	76.79	FRIEND	50.96	PLANTATIONS	31.94
				MOUNTAINS	28.07

EUROPE

Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%
ART	56.51	TRADE	31.42	FISHING	28.79
SCULPTURE	52.70	BEAUTIFUL	29.17	GLORIOUS PAST	27.80
MUSIC	44.75				

ASIA

Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%
OVERPOPULATED	44.15	HINDU	36.41	POOR	30.99
BUDDHIST	37.03	MALNUTRITION	32.67		

SOUTH AMERICA

Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%
PLANTATIONS	44.38	HOT	32.50	TRADE	25.63
PALM TREES	42.16	SNAKES	29.40		

MIDDLE EAST

Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%
DESERTS	35.08	TEMPLES	30.05	MUSLIM	27.83

RUSSIA

Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%
ENEMY	68.18	COLD	46.29	POWERFUL	28.47
DICTATORSHIP	46.42	VIOLENCE	36.74	STRANGE	25.78

TABLE V

STIMULUS TERMS PLACED IN VARIOUS REGIONS BY 25% OR MORE TWELFTH GRADE STUDENTS

AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA

Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%
WITCH DOCTORS	92.78	CANNIBALS	84.90	MISSIONARIES	52.50
WILD ANIMALS	91.40	PYGMIES	84.11	STRANGE	44.20
DRUMS	91.00	POISON DARTS	82.06	BACKWARD	43.61
DAKTARI	90.69	NAKED	78.21	ILLITERATE	42.41
BLACK	89.45	TIGERS	77.66	VILLAGES	41.39
SPEARS	89.72	JUNGLES	76.12	HOT	39.02
TRIBE	88.19	HUTS	69.41	DISEASE	39.00
SAVAGES	88.08	PRIMITIVE	69.03	NO HISTORY	38.15
ELEPHANTS	86.65	SUPERSTITION	68.82	UNDERDEVELOPED	32.09
NATIVES	86.49	SNAKES	56.35	DESERTS	29.27

NORTH AMERICA

Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%
TELEVISION	95.50	CITIES	80.15	FARMS	56.04
DEPARTMENT STORE	94.96	CIVILIZED	78.71	BEAUTIFUL	55.86
FREEDOM	94.70	RAILROAD	78.64	DANCE	55.80
DEMOCRACY	94.57	WHITE	78.41	CAPITALISM	54.76
HOUSES	92.94	WELL-EDUCATED	75.58	RELIGION	54.25
AUTOMOBILES	92.80	BRAVE	74.22	FORESTS	46.73
CLEAN	90.83	POWERFUL	71.71	FISHING	44.57
SCHOOLS	89.59	CHRISTIAN	67.35	GLORIOUS PAST	41.06
RACIAL PROBLEMS	89.05	CHURCHES	61.86	MINERAL WEALTH	35.01
RICH	88.79	CATTLE	57.92	FRIEND	34.42
INDUSTRY	88.05	PEACE	57.75	PLANTATIONS	34.06
LAKES	81.11	FOLK SONGS	56.57	TRADE	30.21
BONANZA	80.50			MUSIC	25.67

EUROPE

Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%
ART	79.95	FRIEND	46.73	NEUTRALITY	39.82
SCULPTURE	75.45	GLORIOUS PAST	41.71	CHURCHES	30.54
MUSIC	60.59	TRADE	40.49	BEAUTIFUL	29.34
				FISHING	27.13

TABLE V
(cont'd)

ASIA

Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%
OVERPOPULATED	70.69	POOR	45.70	MUSLIM	32.04
BUDDHIST	60.28	TEMPLES	42.67	VIOLENCE	27.35
HINDU	57.86	DISEASE	40.41	UNDERDEVELOPED	26.16
MALNUTRITION	57.42	DIRTY	38.68		

SOUTH AMERICA

Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%
PLANTATIONS	55.40	SNAKES	34.66	NEUTRALITY	27.37
PALM TREES	42.76	WEAK	29.23	UNDERDEVELOPED	26.29
HOT	34.79	GRASSLANDS	28.89	VILLAGES	25.84

MIDDLE EAST

Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%
DESERTS	45.60	OIL	38.38	(WEAK)	(24.77)
MUSLIM	39.17	TEMPLES	38.17		

RUSSIA

Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%	Stimulus terms	%
COLD	81.64	DICTATORSHIP	69.96	VIOLENCE	26.19
ENEMY	75.64	SOCIALISM	57.68		

The hypothesized image of Africa south of the Sahara was shown to exist. If students had distributed the twenty-five items which were considered to represent the common stereotype of Africa in a random manner among the seven world regions, 14.29% of the items would have been placed in Africa. When the responses of all students were taken together, 66.58% of the stereotype terms were seen

as describing Africa south of the Sahara better than any other region. The percentage ranged from a low of 52.12% among rural, midwestern seventh graders to a high of 73.82% among suburban, northeastern twelfth graders. Table VI summarizes these results.

TABLE VI

PERCENTAGE OF HYPOTHESIZED STEREOTYPE TERMS ACTUALLY SEEN AS DESCRIBING AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA BETTER THAN ANY OTHER WORLD REGION

Section of United States	Type of School: Urban 7th	Urban 12th	Suburban 7th	Suburban 12th	Rural 7th	Rural 12th	Total 7th	Total 12th
Northeast	64.38%	71.96%	62.64%	73.82%	60.77%	68.00%	62.94%	71.45%
Midwest	64.50	71.03	60.00	73.58	52.12	69.45	62.32	71.16
South	66.24	71.57	67.26	69.81	---	---	66.40	71.28
West	60.96	69.33	---	---	55.92	64.53	59.42	68.13
Total	64.23	70.98	62.94	72.72	57.24	67.31	62.79	70.67
Total of all students								66.58%

Computation of the Degree of Stereotypy for each of the stimulus words demonstrated a strong tendency for students to react according to stereotyped patterns. A purely random distribution of any particular stimulus terms among the seven world regions could be expected to result in a Ds of 0. A completely stereotyped distribution would result in a Ds of 1. A Ds of .170 results from a situation where one half of the students placed a particular item in one region and the rest of the students divided the item equally among the other six regions. Among twelfth grade students, 80% of the ninety stimulus words were distributed so as to produce a Degree of Stereotypy of over .170. The corresponding percentage among seventh grade students was 63.33%. The Ds for each of the ninety stimulus words for seventh grade students and for twelfth grade students is shown by Tables VII and VIII respectively.

TABLE VII

DEGREE OF STEREOTYPY FOR VARIOUS STIMULUS WORDS AMONG SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS

Stimulus word	Ds	Stimulus word	Ds	Stimulus word	Ds
1. TELEVISION	.829	31. DEMOCRACY	.419	61. FORESTS	.151
2. HOUSES	.749	32. CANNIBALS	.416	62. DICTATORSHIP	.148
3. DEPARTMENT STORE	.742	33. BONANZA	.415	63. STRANGE	.147
4. SCHOOLS	.740	34. NAKED	.400	64. GLORIOUS PAST	.147
5. AUTOMOBILES	.731	35. POWERFUL	.368	65. PRIMITIVE	.147
6. FREEDOM	.730	36. PYGMIES	.354	66. PALM TREES	.146
7. WILD ANIMALS	.729	37. CHURCHES	.347	67. FISHING	.138
8. DAKTARI	.689	38. CHRISTIAN	.322	68. HINDU	.131
9. ELEPHANTS	.677	39. HUTS	.315	69. OVERPOPULATED	.130
10. WITCH DOCTORS	.675	40. SNAKES	.299	70. RACIAL PROBLEMS	.128
11. WELL-EDUCATED	.659	41. BRAVE	.293	71. MINERAL WEALTH	.126
12. CLEAN	.646	42. BEAUTIFUL	.269	72. SOCIALISM	.116
13. WHITE	.615	43. CATTLE	.269	73. BUDDHIST	.111
14. JUNGLES	.599	44. ART	.257	74. DIRTY	.097
15. TIGERS	.586	45. FRIEND	.242	75. VIOLENCE	.097
16. SPEARS	.577	46. FOLK SONGS	.229	76. POOR	.093
17. RAILROAD	.566	47. DANCE	.216	77. UNDERDEVELOPED	.081
18. TRIBE	.565	48. SCULPTURE	.207	78. MISSIONARIES	.080
19. NATIVES	.561	49. VILLAGES	.205	79. TRADE	.061
20. CIVILIZED	.558	50. RELIGION	.203	80. MALNUTRITION	.059
21. POISON DARTS	.551	51. MUSIC	.201	81. OIL	.055
22. DRUMS	.546	52. HOT	.196	82. BACKWARD	.055
23. CITIES	.544	53. TEMPLES	.196	83. MUSLIM	.054
24. RICH	.539	54. COLD	.194	84. NO HISTORY	.053
25. BLACK	.538	55. DISEASE	.189	85. MOUNTAINS	.052
26. SAVAGES	.522	56. FARMS	.179	86. COWARDLY	.036
27. LAKES	.507	57. PEACE	.179	87. GRASSLANDS	.035
28. PLANTATIONS	.497	58. CAPITALISM	.174	88. NEUTRALITY	.025
29. INDUSTRY	.475	59. SUPERSTITION	.167	89. ILLITERATE	.010
30. ENEMY	.426	60. DESERTS	.152	90. WEAK	.003

Some correlation exists between the students' responses and grade level, section of the country, and type of school. The correlation is strongest between grade level and the tendency of students to react in a stereotyped manner. Table VI illustrates that, for all possible breaks of the data, a higher percentage of twelfth grade students' responses corresponded to the hypothesized stereotype of Africa south of the Sahara than did the responses of seventh grade students.

Among the seventh grade students, this stereotyped image appeared to be strongest in the urban areas and least strong in the rural areas. It also appeared to be strongest in the southern section of the country and least strong in the western section. Among twelfth grade students, the stereotype was strongest in sub-urban areas and least strong in rural areas. It also was less strong in the western section than in the other three sections. It is probably not worth while to generalize beyond these data in terms of either type of school or section of the country because, although the sample included many students, only a few schools in each section and of each type were sampled. Therefore, it is very possible that the results reflect differences between schools rather than differences between sections of the country or types of schools.

TABLE VIII

DEGREE OF STEREOTYPY FOR VARIOUS STIMULUS WORDS AMONG TWELFTH GRADE STUDENTS

Stimulus word	Ds	Stimulus word	Ds	Stimulus word	Ds
1. TELEVISION	.898	31. CIVILIZED	.585	61. FARMS	.253
2. DEPARTMENT STORE	.886	32. WHITE	.580	62. FRIEND	.250
3. FREEDOM	.880	33. RAILROAD	.572	63. RELIGION	.249
4. DEMOCRACY	.877	34. TIGERS	.563	64. GLORIOUS PAST	.244
5. HOUSES	.842	35. NAKED	.559	65. MISSIONARIES	.231
6. AUTOMOBILES	.840	36. JUNGLES	.553	66. TEMPLES	.227
7. WITCH DOCTORS	.840	37. ENEMY	.546	67. DISEASE	.224
8. WILD ANIMALS	.812	38. SCULPTURE	.414	68. BACKWARD	.220
9. DRUMS	.802	39. POWERFUL	.499	69. DESERTS	.203
10. CLEAN	.796	40. BRAVE	.489	70. HOT	.194
11. DAKTARI	.795	41. OVERPOPULATED	.436	71. FORESTS	.177
12. SPEARS	.776	42. HUTS	.431	72. POOR	.172
13. SCHOOLS	.775	43. DICTATORSHIP	.429	73. MUSLIM	.164
14. BLACK	.772	44. PRIMITIVE	.422	74. STRANGE	.163
15. RICH	.757	45. CHRISTIAN	.415	75. TRADE	.160
16. TRIBE	.747	46. SUPERSTITION	.412	76. VILLAGES	.153
17. SAVAGES	.745	47. CHURCHES	.390	77. ILLITERATE	.149
18. INDUSTRY	.742	48. SNAKES	.347	78. PALM TREES	.148
19. ELEPHANTS	.718	49. PLANTATIONS	.331	79. OIL	.142
20. NATIVES	.717	50. BUDDHIST	.328	80. NEUTRALITY	.141
21. RACIAL PROBLEMS	.716	51. HINDU	.306	81. UNDERDEVELOPED	.127
22. CANNIBALS	.684	52. BEAUTIFUL	.305	82. DIRTY	.110
23. PYGMIES	.668	53. CATTLE	.305	83. NO HISTORY	.105
24. POISON DARTS	.637	54. PEACE	.287	84. FISHING	.098
25. COLD	.623	55. DANCE	.282	85. WEAK	.092
26. CITIES	.610	56. MUSIC	.275	86. VIOLENCE	.087
27. LAKES	.609	57. SOCIALISM	.274	87. MINERAL WEALTH	.086
28. BONANZA	.601	58. MALNUTRITION	.273	88. MOUNTAINS	.059
29. ART	.594	59. FOLK SONGS	.272	89. GRASSLANDS	.059
30. WELL-EDUCATED	.586	60. CAPITALISM	.264	90. COWARDLY	.042

On the other hand, it is possible to generalize about the differences between the responses of seventh grade students and those of twelfth grade students. Table VIII illustrates that this tendency of the older students to give more stereotyped responses is true not only for their concept of Africa south of the Sahara. A higher percentage of responses by twelfth grade students produced a Degree of Stereotype index greater than .170. The mean Degree of Stereotypy for the ninety stimulus words among twelfth grade students was .436, while the corresponding mean among seventh grade students was .322.

Conclusion

To American seventh and twelfth graders, Africa south of the Sahara seems to be a primitive, backward, underdeveloped land with no history--a hot, strange land of jungles and deserts, populated with wild animals such as elephants, tigers, and snakes and by black, naked savages, cannibals and pygmies. Missionaries and witch doctors vie for control of the natives, who live in villages, are prone to superstition and disease, and who hunt with spears and poison darts when not sitting in front of their huts beating on drums. Twelfth grade students add that the natives are illiterate. Seventh grade students make them out to be poor and dirty.

This survey demonstrates that the traditional stereotyped image of Africa does exist. It suggests that it is precisely this image to which students react when terms such as Africa or African arise in their daily lives.

The role of the school in general, or of the social studies in particular, in either perpetuating or destroying these stereotypes is not evident from the research. However, the fact that twelfth grade students give more stereotyped responses than do seventh grade students does suggest that experience in social studies classes does little to diminish stereotyped concepts of world regions.

It may be that very little is actually taught about Africa south of the Sahara in our schools. There is also some evidence that textbooks and other instructional aids used in social studies classes present a picture of Africa south of the Sahara which strengthens rather than weakens the stereotyped preconceptions with which students enter high school. That this latter may be true is given considerable support by the findings of the Project's second survey, the results of which are reported on the following pages.

III

WHAT AMERICAN SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS KNOW ABOUT AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA

Is Africa south of the Sahara a "Dark Continent" for most American secondary school students?

This is a question which Project Africa sought to answer by conducting its second nation-wide survey of seventh and twelfth graders in American schools during the Fall of 1967.

The results of this survey indicate that most seventh and twelfth graders do have some basic knowledge about certain aspects of Africa south of the Sahara. In general, twelfth graders do seem to know somewhat more than seventh graders. The survey also revealed that the very students who have the most knowledge about this region and its peoples also tend to hold stronger misconceptions about it than do those less well informed. These misconceptions seem to be closely related to the stereotyped image of Africa that has been described in the literature and in other related research.

The specific purposes of this survey were four in number. The first was to discover the extent of knowledge about Africa south of the Sahara that American seventh graders brought with them to their classroom study of this region and its peoples. The second was to determine the extent of the knowledge twelfth graders possessed about this same subject. The third was to determine the accuracy of this knowledge and, where it was erroneous, to identify what it was that these students thought was true. Finally, this survey sought to determine the nature of the differences, if any, in the knowledge held by students at each grade level in different types of schools and in different regions in order to identify any relationships that might exist among these factors.

The Survey Instrument

Project Africa designed a special survey instrument to help accomplish these objectives. This instrument was a simple paper and pencil objective test of students' specific and general knowledge about Africa south of the Sahara. It was designed to be easy to administer, score and interpret. Because the only measure of validity would be its face validity, it was also constructed so there would be no doubt about what it was measuring.

A test plan was developed by the Project describing the content and levels of knowledge to be measured. The content objectives

consisted of six aspects of the history and culture of Africa south of the Sahara. These were:

> Physical geography: size, climate, landforms, major rivers, animal life, and map locations.
>
> History before the European penetration: ancient civilization; the Sudanic forest and other kingdoms; and conditions at the time of the European penetration.
>
> History of the Europeans in Africa: exploration, the slave trade, colonialism, imperialism and independence.
>
> Indigenous society: ethnic groups, language, religion, music and the plastic arts.
>
> Economic development: resources, products, infrastructure and problems and present levels of development.
>
> Current affairs: political leaders, major nations, foreign and domestic policies of various nations, and current events.

The knowledge objectives selected were at the 1.00 level of the cognitive domain as described in Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives.[1] These included knowledge of terms, facts, trends and sequences, categories and principles and generalizations. No attempt was made to measure intellectual skills or areas in the affective domain.[2]

Since there was no readily available source of reliable test items on these topics, the Project developed its own. Approximately 120 multiple choice items were designed in accordance with the test plan. These items were then submitted to a panel for evaluation in terms of the significance and accuracy of the content and its relevance to secondary school students. This panel consisted of nine

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1. Benjamin Bloom et al., The Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook I: The Cognitive Domain. New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1956. Pp. 62-88.

2. See Table IX, p. 23 for a detailed description of the test plan.

experienced, secondary school social studies teachers and six Africanists; the latter included an historian, an economist, two political scientists, a geographer and an anthropologist. As a result of this evaluation, many items were reworded or otherwise significantly altered, many were discarded, and new ones were added.

Seventy of the items recommended by the panel were then selected in conformity with the test plan. These were randomly divided into two forms, each containing 35 items. Each of these forms was administered to students representing grades 9-12 in one suburban high school and in one urban high school. The results were analyzed to determine the reliability of each form. Individual items were analyzed for degree of difficulty and for discrimination. As a result, ten items which proved too difficult, which did not discriminate or which discriminated negatively were eliminated.

The survey instrument, in its final form, contained sixty items corresponding to the test plan. These items were printed in an 8½" x 11" booklet entitled AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA. The face page of this booklet contained a statement of the survey's purpose and directions for answering the items which were arranged in two columns on each of six inside pages. An IBM answer sheet was included as an insert in each booklet.

Items related to a specific content area were grouped together so that the final instrument consisted of six sub-tests. The first sub-test, on physical geography, included a map on which students were asked to locate specific data. All items were a multiple choice type with at least four alternative responses per stem. The reliability of this final instrument, computed on the basis of the odd-even technique was .60 for the seventh grade sample and .80 for the twelfth graders. Table IX is a diagrammatic representation of this instrument.

TABLE IX

TEST PLAN FOR: AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA[3]

CONTENT / Sub-Tests	LEVELS OF KNOWLEDGE: Terms 1.11	Specific Facts 1.12	Trends & Sequences 1.22	Class & Categories 1.23	Princ. & General. 1.31	TOTALS (Planned / Final)
Physical Geography	3	8		2	3	25% / 26.6%
History Before European Penetration	1	3			2	10% / 10%
History of Europeans in Africa		1	2	1	2	10% / 10%
Indigenous Society		4		2	2	15% / 13.3%
Economic Development		4			6	15% / 16.6%
Current Affairs	1	12			1	25% / 23.3%
TOTALS (Final / Planned)	8.3% / 10%	53.3% / 50%	3.3% / 5%	8.3% / 10%	26.6% / 25%	100% / 100%

3. The figures within the matrix represent the number of items in each category included in the final instrument.

The Sample

This instrument was administered to seventh and twelfth grade students of average ability in twenty-eight school districts across the United States. These districts were selected to represent each region of the nation as well as urban, suburban and rural areas. The seventh grade sample contained 845 students; 794 students were included in the twelfth grade sample.[4]

Administration of the Survey

The survey instrument was administered in accordance with directions provided by the Project. Each student received a copy of the test booklet and an IBM answer sheet. The face page of this booklet contained complete instructions for providing on the answer sheet the information required of each student--his, or her, name and sex, the name and location of the school, the title of the instrument and the date. The purpose of the survey was described as follows:

> This test is being given to students in junior and senior high schools throughout the United States. It is part of an experimental study to determine how much information and what type of information about Africa south of the Sahara is known by American students today. The results of the test will be used in the development of new instructional materials.

All instructions were read aloud by the survey administrator, in most instances the students' regular teacher, as the students read along on the face page of the instrument. The students were instructed how to record their answers to the questions therein on their IBM answer sheets. It was explained that they were <u>not</u> expected to be able to answer all of these correctly, but that they should attempt as many items as possible in the time allowed. The survey administrator suggested that the students attempt the easy items first and then return to the more difficult items. Guessing was encouraged.

Since the score on the instrument was to be determined by the number of correct responses given, the students were informed that even when they were unsure of the correct answer to an item, they

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4. See pp. 4-5 above for a detailed description of the survey schools and their student populations.

should indicate the response which they felt provided the best answer. All were advised that the results of this survey would in no way affect their class grade.

Thirty minutes were allotted for completion of the instrument; most students completed the entire sixty items within this time limit.[5] Upon completion of the survey the answer sheets and booklets were returned to the Project for analysis and interpretation.

Analysis of the Data

The data were analyzed in several ways. The mean scores on the total instrument for all seventh and for all twelfth graders were computed. This provided a measure of how much was known about Africa south of the Sahara as a whole. These means were then compared to determine what, if any, difference existed between the students at these two grade levels. Of special interest here was the attempt to measure any significant difference that might be attributed to five additional years of learning about this region--learning which may have occurred in and/or out of the formal school setting.

The mean scores of twelfth graders and seventh graders on the six sub-tests of the instrument were then computed and compared to determine which students, if any, were more knowledgeable about each area and to determine which areas were best, and least, known by students at each grade level.

In order to identify any major misconceptions about Africa south of the Sahara that might exist, items in which approximately 45% or more of the students chose a particular incorrect response were isolated and analyzed.[6]

Finally, comparisons were made between grade levels and among the various sections of the country and types of schools to determine if such factors were related to what students know about this region as a whole as well as about specific aspects of it.

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5. As a result of the pre-testing of the instrument it was determined that thirty minutes offered adequate time for almost all students to complete all items.

6. Forty-five per cent corresponds to approximately 12 standard deviations from the chance mean.

Results

Secondary school students' knowledge of Africa south of the Sahara is limited at both the seventh grade and twelfth grade. The mean number of correct responses at the seventh grade level was 18.78 of a possible 60 which is only slightly above chance expectation. The mean number of correct responses at the twelfth grade level was 25.11 of 60. This difference between seventh and twelfth grade means is significant at the .001 level. This supports the expectation that twelfth graders know more than seventh graders.

Table X shows the mean number of correct responses, expressed as a percentage, for each grade level on each of the six sub-tests. In five of the six sub-tests, the mean correct scores for the twelfth grade students ranged from 7 to 14.23 percentage points higher than

TABLE X

MEAN SCORES OF VARIOUS SUBTESTS
FOR SEVENTH AND TWELFTH GRADE STUDENTS

		Seventh Grade		Twelfth Grade	
	number of items	raw score*	* percent of subtest	raw score	percent of subtest
Economic Development	10	4.00	40.00%	5.41	54.10%
Physical Geography*	16	5.85	36.56	6.97	43.56
Indigenous Society*	8	2.58	32.25	3.72	46.50
History of Europeans in Africa	6	1.72	28.67	2.58	43.00
Current Affairs	14	3.80	27.14	5.72	40.86
History before the European Penetration	6	.96	16.00	.84	14.00

*Note that the rankings of Physical Geography and Indigenous Society are reversed for the twelfth grade.

*The raw score represents the mean correct responses for each subtest.

the scores for seventh grade students. The greatest difference was on questions related to the period of European colonialism and imperialism; here the twelfth graders demonstrated considerably more correct knowledge than did seventh graders.

The least difference appeared on questions related to physical geography and map location. Only in the sub-test for African history before European penetration, where both seventh and twelfth grade scores were very low, did the seventh grade students score higher than the twelfth graders. Thus, this analysis provides further evidence that twelfth graders know more about Africa south of the Sahara than do seventh graders.

Furthermore, this analysis demonstrates that students have greater knowledge about some topics than about other topics. The relative ranking of the sub-tests is similar for students at both grade levels. Both scored highest on questions related to economic development, trade and products. The sub-test on physical geography and that on society and culture ranked second and third, respectively, for seventh graders; this ranking was reversed at the twelfth grade. Questions related to European colonialism and imperialism, and current political situations and events were next highest, in that order. Both groups scored lowest on questions related to the history of Africa before the European penetration.

Items to which approximately 45% of the students selected the same incorrect response were chosen as representative of misconceptions commonly held about Africa south of the Sahara. These are described here by giving the stem of the item, the response chosen by most of the students and then the correct response. For example, item #29 in the survey instrument read as follows:

> Timbuctu was important for:
>
> A. its diamond mines.
>
> B. its cool, refreshing climate.
>
> C. its university
>
> D. its oil refinery.

Most students chose response A rather than response C which was actually correct. Therefore, this is reported: "Timbuctu was important for its diamond mines rather than for its university."

Table XI gives the major misconceptions of the seventh grade students and of the twelfth grade students. Five of the six misconceptions are the same for both groups although their relative ranking is not similar.

TABLE XI

MAJOR MISCONCEPTIONS -- SEVENTH GRADE

1. Large wild animals -- such as lions, elephants, and giraffes -- would more likely be found deep in the African jungles than roaming through African parks and game reserves. 56.67%

2. Most of Africa south of the Sahara is covered by jungles rather than by grasslands. 55.12%

3. Traditional religions of Africa south of the Sahara stress a belief in the necessity of human sacrifice to please the gods when they are angry rather than a belief in a Supreme Force or Being who created the universe. 50.48%

4. Timbuctu was important for its diamond mines rather than for its university. 48.45%

5. When European explorers first came to Africa they found no towns or cities, only small villages of huts, rather than many strong kingdoms. 46.67%

6. In terms of dollar value, the most important exports of Africa south of the Sahara are mineral products rather than agricultural products. 43.45%

MAJOR MISCONCEPTIONS -- TWELFTH GRADE

1. In terms of dollar value, the most important exports of Africa south of the Sahara are mineral products rather than agricultural products. 74.31%

2. Traditional religions of Africa south of the Sahara stress a belief in the necessity of human sacrifice to please the gods when they are angry rather than a belief in a Supreme Force or Being who created the universe. 63.35%

3. Timbuctu was important for its diamond mines rather than for its university. 63.48%

4. Most of Africa south of the Sahara is covered by jungles rather than by grasslands. 56.05%

5. When the European explorers first came to Africa they found no towns or cities, only small villages of huts, rather than many strong kingdoms. 55.54%

6. A chief product of the Congo (Kinshasa) is petroleum rather than copper. 51.89%

There is a relationship between the amount of knowledge the students have and the degree to which they hold these misconceptions. On the total test, twelfth grade students scored better than seventh grade students; yet of the five identical misconceptions held by students at both levels every one was supported by a greater percentage of twelfth grade students than seventh grade students. In addition, for those items involving a misconception, only two discriminated adequately between twelfth grade students scoring in the upper half on the total test and students scoring in the lower half.[7] Two of the items were negative discriminators for twelfth grade students. For seventh grade students, none of the six items related to misconceptions discriminated adequately and one was a negative discriminator. This supports the notion that, where certain misconceptions are concerned, the type of information that secondary school students are getting tends to strengthen rather than weaken these misconceptions.

No clear-cut pattern is evident in the breakdown of the data by regions of the United States and by types of schools. This data is presented in Tables XII and XIII. Suburban students scored higher on the total test than urban or rural students. Rural students had the lowest scores. Among seventh grade students, those in the South scored the highest. Among twelfth grade students, students in the Northeast and Midwest scored the highest and students in the West scored the lowest. Since no Southern rural or Western suburban schools were represented in this survey, it is not possible to state whether region of the country or type of school accounts for the variance in the scores. It is possible, however, to note that certain combinations, such as urban and rural schools in the West, are associated with lower scores than are other combinations such as urban and suburban schools in the South.

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7. A point biserial coefficient greater than .20 was considered adequate discrimination.

TABLE XII

MEAN SCORES BY REGION AND TYPE OF SCHOOL

Region	Number of Students	Score
Northeast	432	21.96
Midwest	479	22.36
South	404	22.38
West	324	20.51
Type of School		
Urban	1114	21.86
Suburban	248	23.91
Rural	277	20.21

TABLE XIII

MEAN SCORES BY REGION FOR EACH GRADE LEVEL

Region	Seventh Grade	Twelfth Grade
Northeast	18.44	26.27
Midwest	18.78	26.10
South	20.13	24.39
West	18.20	23.10

Conclusion

When students enter the seventh grade, they have very limited and superficial knowledge about Africa south of the Sahara. They know most about economic development and physical geography and almost nothing about the history of the region, except as it pertains to the European penetration. Students in the final year of secondary school generally know more than students in the seventh grade, but even in the twelfth grade this knowledge is limited.

Both seniors and seventh graders know most about economic development and physical geography and least about history before the European penetration. The twelfth graders scored higher than the seventh graders on five of the six sub-tests. Only on questions related to history before the Europeans did the seventh graders score higher than the seniors; however, neither group scored above the chance level on this sub-test.

Certain misconceptions about Africa south of the Sahara exist among both groups of students. These generally fall into the pattern of a land of jungles, inhabited by wild animals and peoples who practice primitive religious rites -- a land as rich in minerals and precious stones as it is poor in indigenous political and economic institutions. These misconceptions seem to be related to the stereotyped concept of Africa that has been reported in the literature and that was revealed by the WORLD REGIONS PERCEPTION SURVEY discussed in the preceding chapter.

Those students who are most informed about Africa south of the Sahara are likely also to be the most misinformed about this region. In other words, the students who scored highest on the total instrument tended to choose particular incorrect responses to those items identified as relating to misconceptions more often than did those students who scored lowest on the total instrument. This suggests that somewhere students are learning misinformation. The misconceptions may be built into the courses of study followed in secondary schools; they may result from unbalanced treatments of the topic in various instructional materials; or they may come from the popular media. Regardless of where these misconceptions originate, it seems possible to conclude that social studies teachers should be aware of them and on the look out for them, so that they can be corrected.

In sum, this survey shows that American students know very little about Africa south of the Sahara. It also reveals that much of what they do know is inaccurate and stereotyped. This is as true of twelfth graders who have presumably had some formal study of this region during their secondary schooling as it is of seventh graders who have had none.

IV

CONCLUSION

The surveys conducted by Project Africa during the Fall of 1967 demonstrated that American secondary school students have limited and often superficial knowledge about Africa south of the Sahara. Both surveys reveal that these students have a stereotyped image of the region and that this image contains many misconceptions. The survey of basic knowledge reveals further that their knowledge is minimal and that, while a limited amount is known about some topics, there are topics about which they know virtually nothing.

The image of Africa south of the Sahara described by the results of the WORLD REGIONS PERCEPTION SURVEY and supported by the major misconceptions identified through the survey of basic knowledge, is hardly a balanced picture of the present African scene. Indeed, it is not a balanced picture of the African scene past or present!

This image is generally one of primitive backwardness, of steaming jungles and large wild animals, of strange peoples and exotic customs, of danger and savage violence. The image contains more of the glitter of diamonds and precious minerals than of the day-to-day sustinence of groundnuts, yams, manioc, and sorghum. It smacks of high adventure, of explorers and missionaries, more than of the peaceful routines of farming and fishing or of the hurly-burly routines of trade and commerce in urban areas. The image is out of focus, distorted, lacking in perspective, unbalanced and stereotyped. The image is in need of repair.

This image of Africa south of the Sahara does not represent <u>all</u> that students know about the region. Probably, if most high school students were pressed through questioning or by an examination, they would demonstrate a knowledge of cities and industries and of educated men in Africa. They might be aware that South America has proportionately more "jungle" than does Africa and that most of Africa south of the Sahara is actually covered by savanna type grasslands. Possibly they might even realize that tigers are native to the South Asian subcontinent, not to Africa. Nevertheless, it is this stereotyped image which appears to dominate students' thinking about the region and its peoples.

In part, this image, like any image, is based on information, misinformation, and lack of information. For example, it is no wonder that students see Africa south of the Sahara as a land of "no history" when the survey of basic knowledge demonstrates that they have virtually no knowledge of the region before the coming of the Europeans. Students simply have never heard of Zimbabwe, Benin, and Ashanti, or of Sonni Ali, Osei Tutu, or Mansa Musa.

The mis-information that students have about Africa may come primarily from the popular media. While students may never have heard of Africa's Sudanic kingdoms, they probably have heard of Tarzan, Jungle Jim, and King Solomon's Mines. If Tarzan lives in the jungles along with his lion and elephant friends, and this is all that a student knows about Africa, the student's image of Africa will certainly not be accurate. If a student has seen innumerable drawings or animated cartoons of missionaries in the cooking pot with savages dancing around the fire, but has never seen a photograph of an African farmer or fisherman, he will not have a balanced image of the region. As long as students go to camp and sing about Zulu kings sitting underneath coconut trees, and as long as such songs are their chief source of information, their image of Africa south of the Sahara will be distorted.

No doubt the current content of the popular media presents a somewhat more accurate view than has been true in the past. Daktari and Cowboy in Africa may very well still "o're unhabitable downs, place elephants for want of towns," but at least people travel by jeep and plane rather than by swinging vine and the Africans communicate in languages rather than by grunts and beating on hollow logs. However, it will take more than Clarence the Cross-eyed Lion to erase the image of Africa south of the Sahara that American students presently hold.

Much of the accurate information about Africa that students receive, they receive from formal instruction in social studies classrooms. Since the majority of social studies teachers are not well informed about the region, the type of information that students receive is determined primarily by the instructional materials used in these classrooms. Usually the information contained in commercial instructional materials -- textbooks, paperback books, films, filmstrips, records, -- is accurate, although sometimes certain misconceptions about Africa are so widely held that they will slip in. For example, one otherwise accurate filmstrip-record combination names tigers as one of the many wild animals to be found in Africa. In addition many of the materials are very much out-of-date, for what may have been true of Africa five years ago may very well not be true of it today. The problem, therefore, with instructional materials is usually less one of accuracy of information, than it is one of lack of balance and up-to-dateness in the information presented.

This lack of balance is especially noticeable in the elementary grades. Here instruction about Africa south of the Sahara tends to focus on the strange and the bizzare. There are very few pygmies in Africa in relation to the total population; yet, in terms of what

students study in elementary school, pygmies would seem to be a major segment of the population -- or, in some cases, the total population. Since pygmies live for the most part in rainforest areas, the image of Africa as a land covered by jungle is reinforced.

Where broader coverage is given to Africa, the strange animals, the gold and diamonds of Southern Africa, and the tall, graceful Tutsi warriors are other favorite topics of study. There are text materials, pictures, films, and filmstrips available about all of these. For the most part the specific information is accurate, or at least was, when the material was prepared. However, when the study of Africa south of the Sahara focuses on these and only these topics, the resultant image and knowledge is most inaccurate and misleading.

In the secondary grades, Africa is treated differently than it is in the elementary school. In the former it is most often studied in a course on world geography in which the emphasis is on the physical and economic geography of various world regions. Sometimes the intent of this course is to focus on human or cultural geography, but even then, places and products play a major role. The lack of balance in such courses results from attempting to survey all of Africa south of the Sahara in a limited amount of time. Facts which can be easily isolated and memorized tend to become the goals of hurried surveys. Capital cities, chief products, major rivers, and leading political figures can be gleaned from a twenty-one day travelog of the dark continent. Besides, these are all facts that are either correct or incorrect -- there is little need for depth of knowledge or interpretation on the part of the student or teacher. Topics which require deeper understanding, topics such as historical development, cultural diversity, or problems of modernization, are passed over for lack of time, for lack of teacher knowledge, and for lack of instructional materials.

Sometimes Africa south of the Sahara is studied in the world history course that is taught in most secondary schools. However, in this course it is studied from the points of view of European exploration, colonialism, and imperialism. The students see the region and its peoples through the very parochial eyes of explorers, missionaries, entrepreneurs, and adventurers. They study it only as an appendage of European history, as an arena in which the destinies of western civilization were enacted. This culture-bound view distorts Africa's past and gives little insight into the present.

Seen in this perspective, the results of Project Africa's surveys are not particularly surprising. Limited and superficial student knowledge is the logical consequence of limited and superficial study in school, especially, as in this instance, where experiences outside of formal instruction present an even more distorted image of the region. The finding that the better students--those who know the most about Africa south of the Sahara--tend to hold more misconceptions and to be more stereotyped in their thinking suggests that poor lessons have been learned well.

That twelfth graders tend to be more stereotyped than seventh graders in their thinking about all world regions is more disconcerting. One might hope that students leaving high school would be more open, more divergent in their thinking, than students entering high school. The results of the WORLD REGIONS PERCEPTION SURVEY suggest that this is not the case. It can not be concluded, on the basis of this evidence, that experience in social studies classes leads to an increasingly stereotyped world view. However, an implication of these results is that, if some of the goals of instruction in the social studies are that students should develop skills of critical evaluation and should learn to see the world around them as it actually exists, social studies instruction is not succeeding in accomplishing them.

It is not possible, nor is their any intent here, to cite a particular cause or to place particular blame for the image that American secondary school students have of Africa south of the Sahara. The intent of this research was simply to describe this image for ourselves and for other teachers and curriculum planners so that we and they might plan accordingly.

Regardless of the cause, teachers need to be aware of the nature and prevalence of this image of Africa south of the Sahara so that they can guard against its slipping into their teaching. They should attempt to have their class presentations, whether these be through lectures, films, or textbooks, present a balanced view of the African scene. Perhaps they should even attempt to destroy stereotyped images by presenting material which contradicts, rather than reinforces, what students think or believe about this region.

Assuming that social studies teachers, curriculum planners, and producers of instructional materials believe that it is important that students leave secondary school with a basic understanding of the geography, history, culture, and current affairs of Africa south of the Sahara, and assuming that this understanding should be

as correct as possible, the results of Project Africa's two surveys indicate that Africa south of the Sahara must receive more adequate treatment in elementary and secondary schools than it presently does --in both quantity and quality. This treatment in school may do little to change the image of Africa presented by other media, but at least it should help students to see this image for what it is-- an unbalanced distortion built up through centuries of ignorance and viewed through the culture-bound prejudice of Western eyes.